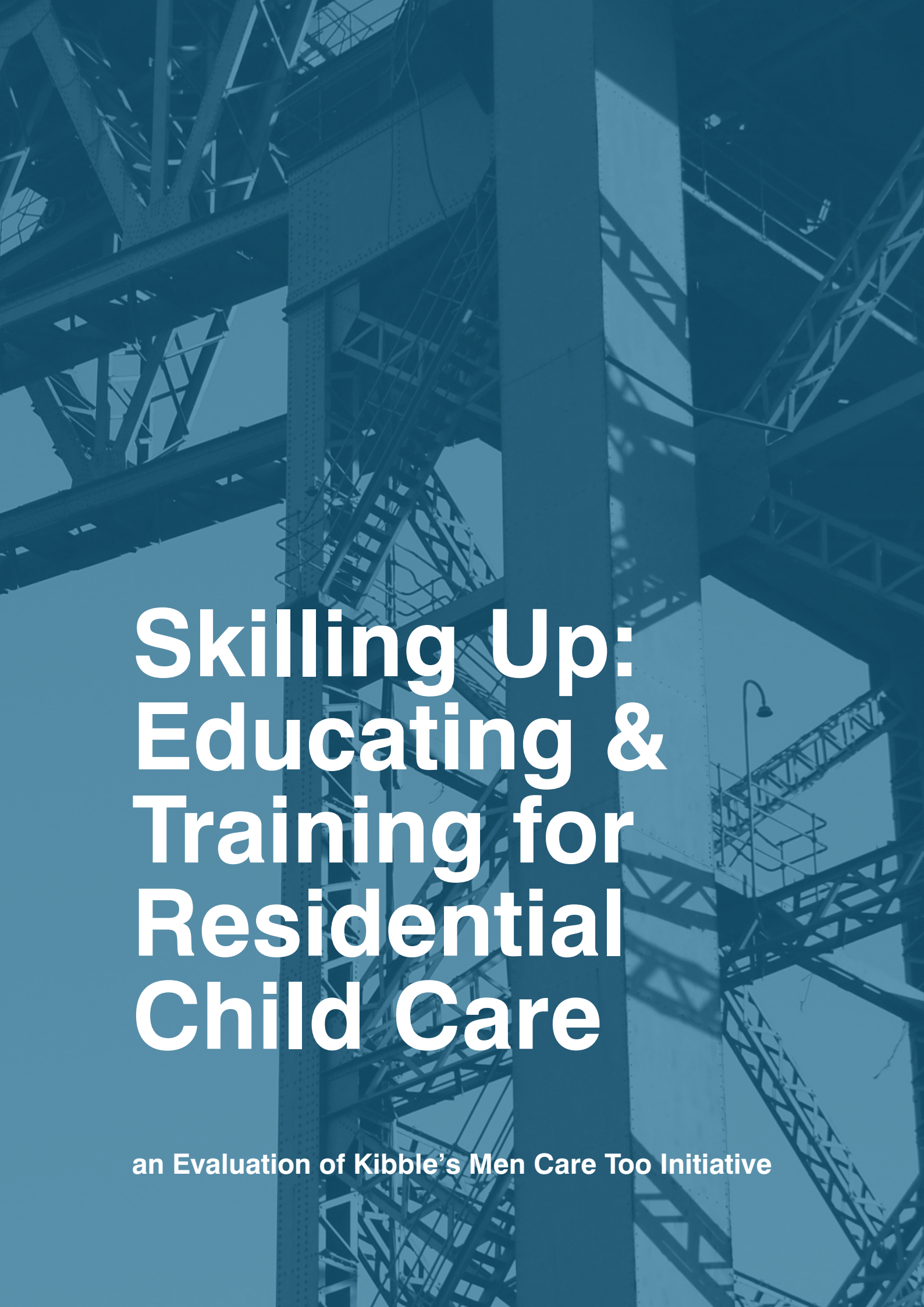
Skilling Up



Skilling Up: Educating & Training for Residential Child Care

an Evaluation of Kibble's Men Care Too Initiative

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the help we were given in completing this evaluation by Kibble staff and by the Men Care Too trainees who gave up their time to be interviewed by us.

Kibble wish to acknowledge grant support from the European Social Fund, which allowed Men Care Too to offer opportunities for individuals to retrain, upskill and increase their employment opportunities. It also offered local organisations a pool of qualified candidates, thereby improving the performance of the local economy. Finally the project made a significant contribution to the EU goals by addressing social inequalities and improving the general performance of the labour market.

Thanks are also due to Liam Evaskitas who was a student from the University of the West of Scotland undertaking his degree in Marketing. Whilst on extended work placement Liam gave a significant commitment of his time , support and hard work to the Men Care Too programme Liam was an invaluable source of support to the MCT Team, the trainees and the evaluation team throughout the duration of the project. We wish him the best for the future.

Kibble
EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE

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I love it. Absolutely love it. The fact that you're sitting here, writing stuff down, and you're phoning guys up, (...) 46-year-old guys don't phone one another and talk about sociology essays!

The authors

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Contents

Executive Summary

This report evaluates an initiative to recruit and train men for work in social care, a field of employment where they are traditionally under-represented. The project was based at Kibble Education and Care Centre in Paisley and was match-funded through The European Social Fund and Kibble itself. The project consisted of two cohorts of trainees being taken through a programme of classroom based training and hands-on work experience to give them the necessary qualifications to seek full-time employment in social care settings. It built upon previous men Can Care initiatives run by Kibble.

This particular project began in April 2008 and completed in December 2010. The evaluation sought to consider the progress of the project and its impact on individual participants and on Kibble. The findings are set within discussion of wider issues of men in social care.

The main findings from the evaluation are:

- Men are significantly under-represented in the social care work force.
- There are a number of historical and cultural reasons to explain this under-representation.
- Interest in the Men Care Too project, as in previous Men Can Care projects suggests that there is a large pool of men, currently in non-care jobs who would be very keen to make the transition into the care sector.
- While the recruitment focus was to target men, women were also eligible to apply for the programme and eight women joined.
- The Men Care Too project was intended as a wider sector initiative to provide a pool of suitably trained employees across the social care sector locally. Potential partner agencies, however, were generally not sufficiently financially strong to participate in the training and match-funding; this meant that the programme was based at and managed by Kibble.
- This initiative differed from previous Men Can Care projects in that it required that trainees were already in employment; the Men Care Too programme required that trainees commit to eight hours training and eight hours work experience per week on top of their substantive employment.
- Trainees were offered the opportunity to achieve a Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Level Three qualification in social care, thus bringing them up to the qualification level required for employment in residential child care and social care more generally.
- Trainees joined the programme from a range of employment backgrounds; many had some experience of youth work or care work in some (usually voluntary) capacity.

- The life experiences of most trainees meant that they were generally fairly confident about working with the young people at Kibble.
- The demands of this commitment and perhaps a lack of appreciation of these demands by prospective trainees led to a fairly high drop-out rate from the original intake of 78 trainees.
- The level of drop-out from the original intake led Kibble to apply to the European Social Fund for additional match-funding to run a second cohort of the programme; this began in August 2009 but timescales were truncated to ensure a December 2010 completion date; this placed additional time demands on the second cohort of trainees.
- The second cohort encountered less drop-out; project staff felt they had become more adept at managing the programme and ensuring that trainees did not fall behind.
- The programme was generally well paced with some obvious transition points between its various stages; celebrating these through organized events and ceremonies gave trainees a sense of achievement and of being valued.
- The demands of the programme entailed significant sacrifices on the part of trainees and the balancing of different aspects of their lives - their substantive employment, Men Care Too training and work experience and personal and family commitments; this left little room for anything going wrong in their lives such as personal or family illness.
- Trainees felt well supported by the project staff and by Kibble staff more generally, who were considered to be sympathetic to their situations. The support of family members was also essential.
- In-house training and HNC study was generally very well-received – trainees were often surprised how much they enjoyed and could relate to theoretical ideas; many could evidence changes in attitudes and in their responses to family and friends.
- Trainees also enjoyed the work experience aspects of the programme and began to use their training to look behind boys' behaviours to try to understand how these might relate to their previous experiences.
- SVQ assessment was introduced fairly late on in the overall programme (especially for the second cohort) thus intensifying the pressures trainees felt under – they began to question whether completion was achievable and drew comparison between expectations placed on them and on previous cohorts.
- Many trainees found the mechanics of the SVQ model to be arduous and difficult to grasp; this added to the pressures they felt on them in the latter stages of the programme.
- Most trainees who completed the first cohort of the Men Care Too

programme found employment at Kibble in some capacity, whether full-time, anualised hours or sessional contracts.

- Fewer of the second cohort found employment at Kibble – 20 out of the original 42 were offered contracts – others found employment elsewhere in social care.
- The various Men Can Care initiatives have been felt by Kibble staff to benefit the School by providing a body of potential employees who are well trained.
- The cohort model of delivery allows cultural issues, particularly in relation to gender to be addressed in training; this was felt to lead to a greater awareness of gender issues in relation to care across the School.
- The project's conclusion coincides with the economic downturn and financial pressures being brought to bear on social care agencies.
- Most of the successful trainees, nevertheless, were able to move into employment in the social care sector; in this sense the Men Care Too initiative has been successful in providing a pool of skilled men qualified to enter social care and make a contribution to the lives of young people in this field.

Kibble Education and Care Centre

Kibble was founded in 1857 following a bequest from a local heiress, Miss Elizabeth Kibble, to establish ‘a charitable institution to reclaim youthful offenders against the law’. Since then, reflecting the changing national picture in respect of residential special education in Scotland, Kibble has undergone a number of changes in designation through Approved and ‘List D’ School to residential school offering specialist services. Throughout its history, however, Kibble has maintained its original purpose to work with boys who have offended or are at risk of offending. It now describes itself as a multi-purpose education and care centre and is the largest such service in the UK. It offers a range of social care provision through community outreach, residential care, secondary education, intensive fostering, secure care and employment training for care leavers. These latter functions are delivered through a portfolio of social enterprise companies, ‘Kibbleworks’.

The current Men Care Too project builds upon similar previous initiatives, Men Can Care, which ran in consecutive years, 2004 and 2005. Both of these were subject to external evaluation (Smith, Macleod and Mercadante 2006) and (Lerpiniere and Milligan 2006).

Introduction

The evaluation charts the progress of Men Care Too from its beginnings in April 2008 until its completion in January 2011. It specifically follows the journeys of several trainees who joined a second cohort of the programme in August 2009. The evaluation locates these within the overall programme as well as within previous initiatives that Kibble has been involved in to bring more men into child care.

The report is divided into four parts:

Section One: considers some of the wider contextual factors relevant to the Men Care Too project, such as gender and care and the specific cultural and workforce issues pertaining to social care in Scotland.

Section Two: outlines some of the background to and the organisational features of the Men Care Too programme.

Section Three: charts trainees' journeys through the project.

Section Four: offers some themes and observations regarding the project.

The Bigger Picture: men and child care

Residential child care is a gendered field of practice. A majority of those placed there are boys, whilst those who care for them are predominantly female. It is difficult to ascertain exact figures for the proportions of boys and girls placed and male and female staff working in residential child care because government statistics do not gather data directly around these questions. However, from the figures that are available it can be estimated that around seventy percent of children in residential child care in Scotland are boys while the gender split within the workforce is around two females to one male (Smith 2010).

The history of residential child care reflects gendered stereotypes. Child care policy following World War 2 recommended that residential child care be based around a model of the nuclear family. This was reflected on the ground in the development of family group homes run by married couples, where the 'auntie' kept home whilst the 'uncle' went out to work. A similar model prevailed in residential schools through the housemaster/housemistress system. Gender roles were well-defined and traditional, based around breadwinner and homemaker divisions.

With women identified as carrying out the nurturing aspects of care, the role of men could be narrowly conceived around tasks such as maintaining discipline and good order. Cameron (2006) argues that underlying gender divisions in child care can remain based around ideas about the domestic division of labour, with male workers positioned as performing what might be considered to be stereotypical male tasks in families.

Despite the overall dominance of women in care work, there is significant segregation within the workforce; men are more likely to be found in settings (including residential schools) where there is an element of control attached to the job (Walton 1975). Kibble, in many respects, bucks the wider trend of female dominated workforces in care settings, having a rough balance of men and women working at any one time and having slightly more men than women on the overall staff complement.

There can be considerable ambivalence over men's involvement in care work, particularly where this involves the provision of intimate personal and physical care (Christie 1998). Following a series of child abuse 'scandals' that have come to light in care settings there has been an increasing public and professional anxiety around the risks of employing men. Some authors (e.g. Pringle 1992) have gone so far as to argue that men should not be employed in this sector because of their implication in child abuse, a position later modified (Pringle 2001).

One impact of abuse scandals was to shift the construction of men in care from the breadwinner of earlier discourses, to their being identified as a risk to children (Christie 2001). In fact, social work discourses and practice cultures more generally have come to construct men in a variety of ways that are problematic (Scourfield 2003).

> Tae Hell wi this Jessie business every time I'm oot o a job! I'm no turning masel intae a bloomin skivvy! I'm a man!
>
> 'Men Should Weep' (1947)

The reality is that child abuse in care settings is neither common nor exclusively male. However, given the level of media attention that such instances attract, it has been suggested that the fear of being the subject of an allegations may put men off applying for care work (Rolfe 2005). Given the small numbers of men actually involved, Cameron (2001) identifies the need to uncouple men and abuse.

Residential schools can be particularly prey to gendered assumptions. They have been claimed to reinforce traditional conceptions of masculinity and to operate 'macho' cultures with an emphasis on control (Barter, 2003, 2006). The Scottish Government's systemic review of abuse in residential care (Shaw 2007, Sen *et al*, 2008) resurrects questions of the relationship of masculinity to abuse although these publications fail to offer evidence to this end or to define what a macho culture may look like.

A specific contextual factor that may impact upon perceptions of care is a cultural one. Scottish, and perhaps especially West of Scotland, culture positions men in very traditional ways, associated with heavy industry and perhaps the heavy drinking and patriarchal imagery that goes along with that. There may still be some residue of this culture around although the evaluation of the first Men Can Care initiative (Smith *et al* 2006) suggests a far more nuanced picture than this, with men, while well aware of the West of Scotland male stereotypes, rarely seeing themselves in such portrayals.

This landscape has changed significantly in recent decades; it is now a largely post-industrial one. Economic and structural changes in society, specifically those related to the decline in heavy industry, have disrupted and fragmented traditional male employment roles. This has led to a political emphasis on providing opportunities for lifelong learning to allow men to adapt to more diverse and fluid employment patterns. Social care is a growth area in this regard but as noted above, one that has historically been (and continues to be) highly gendered.

Against this backdrop, men who consider entering residential child care or social care more generally have a number of historical, societal and professional obstacles to negotiate. However, there are signs of change and a climate that positively encourages men to care is emerging.

> I am 50 next year and the thought of doing something new at 50 is really quite appealing to me.
>
> I've always wanted to try something, but I was too feared, because I was involved in construction for a lot of years.

The changing climate

While the wider climate may pose obstacles to recruiting men to residential child care a strong case can be made for their presence in care settings. Some of this case comes on the back of a greater awareness of the important role that fathers play in their children's lives (Fatherhood Institute 2010) and encouragement for greater father involvement (Equal Opportunities Commission 2006).

Fathering has also appeared on government agendas. In 2008, Beverley Hughes, the then Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families at Westminster said: "I want to see a revolution in how teachers, midwives,

doctors, early years and all children's services staff routinely talk to and provide opportunities for the involvement, not only of mothers but also fathers, from pregnancy and right through childhood and adolescence." (BBC News 8 January 2008). Since then at official policy levels there has been a growing recognition of the importance of involving fathers in child care (DCSF 2008).

In 2008, the Scottish Government recognised that: "We know that we have more work to do on addressing the role of fathers in children's education and social care" (Scottish Government 2008, p.28). This promise has yet to bear fruit. There is, nonetheless, change afoot in Scotland with studies emerging that point towards the positive contribution that young Scottish fathers can and wish to make in the lives of their children (Ross et al 2010) and the formation in 2010 of Fathers Network Scotland, an umbrella body for fathers' workers and groups.

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) created by the UK Parliament through the 2006 Equality Act provides a significant boost to arguments for greater gender awareness in care settings. The GED places a duty on public bodies to promote gender equality and requires employers to design employment and services with the different needs of men and women in mind (Thomson et al 2005). This legislation has important implications for men and children, especially those working and living in care settings, where questions of gender can assume a particular importance in situations, for example, there may be an absence of positive male role models in the lives of many children in such settings.

The charity 'Children in Scotland' has been instrumental in taking forward discussion regarding the implications of the GED. The Scottish Government has recognised some of its implications, noting that; "We know that approximately 97.8 % of the early years and childcare workforce are female, we know that this workforce is relatively low-skilled and low-paid; we also know that we need to do more to encourage men to enter into this profession…The lack of men in caring, teaching and personal care services and the general low value attached to these services need to be tackled" (Scottish Government 2008 p.28).

In addition to seeking to bring about greater equality in employment opportunities the GED also requires that public agencies take into account the differential needs of boys and girls and men and women in the planning and delivery of services. In that sense, previous approaches to equal opportunities, which sought to provide the same access to services across the board, are deemed to be inadequate as they fail to take into account the different starting points and experiences of boys and girls.

Boys, for instance, are far more likely to be excluded from school than girls. They are also far more likely to be diagnosed with behavioural problems, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and conditions on the autistic spectrum. In general terms boys tend to value school-based education less than girls. They are more frequently perceived by teachers to

> "From coming where I come from as well, the Gorbals, I seen a lot of people there went the wrong route. It was just as easy for me to go down the wrong route as for anybody else, I think it was more luck than judgement. So I thought this might be something where I can give something back."

A word on terminology: In the UK, Kibble's core task would be described as residential child care. Kibble increasingly uses the term child and youth care. This brings it more into line with international models of practice but is also more descriptive of the group of boys that Kibble works with. They are adolescents and young adults or youth rather than children (although most of them would still, legally, be classed as children). This question of terminology is significant inasmuch as Kibble has found in the past that the way the job is described can influence the gender of candidates applying to work in the field. The use of the term children or child seems to attract more women, the use of the term youth seems to draw in more men who may have some background in voluntary youth work of some sort. We use the term residential child care when referring to the wider literature and child and youth care when referring specifically to Kibble.

present challenging classroom behaviour and have lower attainment levels than girls. The Gender Equality Duty requires public services to recognise these differences and work to address them appropriately.

Qualifications and residential child care

In many respects, reflecting the fact that care work is considered to be, largely, women's work, residential child care or child and youth care, is an historically undervalued area of the social services. The sector has experienced persistent problems in respect of recruiting suitably qualified staff. The level of qualification deemed necessary for residential child care has been incrementally reduced from earlier expectations that workers should be professionally qualified in social work to the current situation where the required qualifications are a Higher National Certificate (HNC) (in any subject) and Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) at Level 3.

The Men Care Too project set out to provide trainees with this entry level training for social care, awarding those who successfully completed the programme with an HNC in Care and SVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care. Achievement of these dual qualifications would allow them to seek employment across a range of social care settings and in that sense aimed to serve this wider sector rather than merely Kibble.

Men Care Too: the right time and place

As noted, the Men Care Too project builds upon Kibble's previous successful Men Can Care initiatives, which ran in 2004 and 2005. A number of the graduates of these earlier programmes are now employed at Kibble and some have gone on to take up senior positions. Previous Men Can Care initiatives are credited by project staff with being instrumental in changing the culture of Kibble, away from a very traditionally masculine one to a place where images of masculinity are far more nuanced and rounded and where everyday interactions seem more relaxed and less controlling.

The changing landscape in respect of care and of changing employment patterns suggests that the Men Care Too initiative is of its time and place. Questions of men and child care have come more to the fore since the Men Can Care initiatives. The 'discovery' of the value of male parenting and the requirement to ensure greater gender equality in child care work can be seen as 'pull' factor drawing men to child care while the decline in manufacturing and other traditional opportunities for male employment can seen as a 'push' towards alternative forms of work for men. This resonance with official rhetoric and policy positions the Men Care Too project at the forefront of progressive thinking and practice in these areas.

Men Care Too

This section covers the background to the Men Care Too initiative and serves as an introduction to our discussion of the trainees' experiences of becoming a residential child and youth care worker.

The Men Care Too project was funded through the European Social Fund Priority 2 - Progressing Through Employment, which has as its aim 'to improve the skills of the workforce to enhance employability, productivity, adaptability, inclusion and entrepreneurial expertise' (European Structural Fund Programmes in Scotland).

The key groups Priority 2 seeks to assist include:

- Employees who lack basic core skills, including those having low levels of literacy and numeracy, and those for whom English is not their first language
- Employees without qualifications at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 5 and 6 (SVQ Level 2 or 3)
- Specific groups, such as women returners
- Potential and new entrepreneurs and new managers of both new and existing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- Key staff in social enterprises.

Four groups of activities are envisaged:

- Support for low-skilled/low-paid workers, for example through vocational training
- Addressing gender imbalances in the workforce, notably through specialist training and mentoring programmes
- Improving managerial skills, for example through managerial, e-business and commercial training and helping less-represented groups start businesses.

It was intended that Men Care Too should involve five other social care partner agencies. In the event, none of these other agencies had the finance or infrastructure necessary to support the project. As a result the whole training programme was based at Kibble. The skills acquired equipped trainees for employment across the social care sector.

In April 2008 The Men Care Too project set out to recruit 78 participants. The duration of the project, overall, was to span three years. Participants were recruited on the basis of having no direct experience and a lack of skills necessary to work in the care sector. Others might have some background in care settings and be ready to progress to HNC level training. Both groups at the point of admission to the project were identified as lacking the necessary personal, social and or technical skills and vocational qualifications necessary to enter and secure sustainable employment in the care field.

Braehead Recruitment Fair

Recruitment

Advertising and recruitment followed a similarly rigorous pattern to the earlier Men Can Care projects, involving a combination of means such as a market stall at a large local shopping centre, newspaper advertisements and more targeted approaches to try and attract a diverse range of applicants. While the programme was specifically targeted at men, women were not excluded from applying. However, because the focus of advertising was so obviously men it tended to be those women with some 'insider' knowledge that women were eligible to apply who did so. Men Care Too differed from previous Men Can Care initiatives in that trainees were required to be in work and to pursue their training for care work outwith their working weeks. On the one hand, this enabled trainees to undertake the training required for a change of career whilst continuing to earn a living. On the other, it required significant sacrifices of time and effort to balance existing employment with the demands of the programme and personal or family commitments.

Recruitment began in April 2008 for an August 2008 start to the programme. There were 232 applications. From this, 74 men and four women were made offers to start the programme. A total of 11 participants either withdrew before the programme began or failed to turn up on the first day.

The Recruits

Those who entered the programme came from different walks of life: several were skilled tradesmen, others taxi-drivers or driving instructors and still others were self-employed in the financial sector. The age range was from 21 to 57 although most fell into the 31 to 49 bracket. The profile of those taken on tends to reflect a picture of trainees seeking what might be thought of as 'second chance careers', some concerned about their longer term prospects in their current employment and others keen to embark on a more satisfying work than they had enjoyed to date.

What was on offer

Those who joined the Men Care Too programme were offered a combination of Kibble's in-house induction training, teaching and assessment on the HNC in Social Care and, latterly, SVQ assessment. An external company, The UK Centre for Continuing Professional Development, contracted by Kibble for this purpose, delivered the HNC and SVQ components of the programme. In addition to the more formal aspects of training, participants were expected to undertake a paid shift per week on one of the units in Kibble. This configuration gave trainees the opportunity to put their learning into practice, a feature that became particularly important once SVQ assessment started.

Drop-off

The initial withdrawals or 'no-shows' on the programme were followed by a significant number of subsequent drop-offs. By December 2008 a further six had left and by the end of the programme a total of 37 had left or failed to complete. The reasons given for most of this fall-out was difficulties in balancing work and family commitments.

A second cohort

In light of the level of fall-out from the original cohort and resultant difficulties in meeting the intended outcomes of the programme, Kibble applied to the ESF for support to run a second tranche of the programme, again on a match-funded basis. This bid was successful.

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> "Over the course of the project's two cohorts, we got better at managing the programme. Our communication with the trainees improved and we got tighter at keeping them to task and up to date with their work."
>
> View from staff.

> "Some of it is going to be challenging, but on the construction site you get some big scaffolders growling at you, that's just life, so you've just got to take it as it comes.
>
> The trust in the people around us is tremendous, so rather than worrying about it, I am trusting that they will give us the skills and tools we will need.
>
> I am ready to hit this head on, I'm excited about it."

“I am sacrificing my weekends, which is a very big sacrifice at this minute but the first bit is just going to be training, and I won’t have to give up as much. But I know, come January, that will be the case, but by that time I will have got myself into that way of doing. Otherwise, there will probably be a bit of studies involved, I don’t feel that a sacrifice, because it’s going to make me grow in myself.

Plus, I spend my full holiday time with him. I will sacrifice my time, but I would hate to have to sacrifice my time with him and I’m hoping I’m not going to have to do that. I will work around it.

I have got a son, who also said to me “don’t worry about seeing me at weekends”. He is 15 and he doesn’t want to see his dad anymore, but I still want to see my son obviously. He said “go for this”, but I see that as a wee bit of a sacrifice, I have given up my time with my son. I give up any leisure time I have and am quite happy to do that.”

The second cohort consisted of 42 trainees. Recruitment commenced in April 2009. After a process of selection, which involved individual and group interviews as well as a discussion with a child presently resident in Kibble, 38 men and 4 women commenced training in August 2009. Their ages ranged between 22 and 59 yrs old. This cohort consisted of trainees from similar backgrounds to those who began in August 2008.

Because of the truncated timescales available to this second cohort, they were only guaranteed completion of the four mandatory units of the SVQ by the end of the programme, which remained December 2010. This entailed that trainees would have to access the four additional units required for the full award through some other route.

Our evaluation commenced at this stage and it is the experience of trainees recruited to this phase of the programme that forms the substantive part of the present report.

How we carried out our evaluation

We conducted:

- Four sets of interviews with nine trainees in the second cohort (commenced August 2009) timed to chart their journeys through the Initiative
- Two Focus Groups conducted after formal training had begun and at the point where trainees had just started work on SVQs
- Interviews with two ‘graduates’ of the first cohort
- Interviews with key informants on the project such as managers and trainers

We:

- Observed training and course presentations
- Participated in the ‘graduation’/transition dinner marking the trainees’ completion of the in-house training and their move into the HNC component
- Undertook desk-based work, such as conducting a literature review, reviewing a sample of applications and rejections and drawing upon project documentation gathered by the Men Care Too team.

'Graduates' from previous Men Can Care initiative

“I seen it advertised and I said to myself, ‘Why not?’ and the more I looked into it, checked out the Kibble website, read up on it, asked friends and family members, ‘Could you see me doing that?’ and a lot of them could …”

The Journey Through the Programme

A Timeline for the cohort of trainees who began in August 2009 is outlined below. Evaluative comments have been mostly reserved for the next section in which the trainees’ journeys through the training and broad emergent themes will be considered.

April 2009

Deciding to Apply and Getting Through
Recruitment of second cohort begins. Advertisements go out, applications come in, rejections, interviews and offers.

August 2009

Starting Over: Anticipations, Hopes and Study Worries
Induction and Commencement of in-house training. This portion of the Programme involved the trainees in group formation and saw the emergence of an ‘esprit de corps’/ cohort identity which became evident at the next way-marker

January 2010

Rites of Passage: Discomforts, Banter and First Shifts
Celebration of Programme - certificates awarded to mark progress and transition. Supervised work offered to those who have completed this stage. Trainees commence HNC Training. Academic learning and work on the units begins

September 2010

The Last Furlong: Heat Turned Up
HNC almost finished although still assignments to complete. Commence SVQ Training, competency-based training

December 2010

Endings and Beginnings
Successful participants offered employment, either full-time, part-time or sessional. Others take-up employment elsewhere. Those who secured employment at Kibble continue towards achievement of full SVQ3.

December – April 2011

Completion of SVQ training underwritten by Kibble for those trainees now in its employ.

Journeys through the programme

Our evaluation of the Men Care Too initiative proceeded from the understanding that key aspects such as the success of the recruitment strategy, the impact of the education and training inputs and eventual outcomes could be best accessed and understood by following the journeys of a sample of trainees through the programme. Their experiences, feelings and views provide an insider's perspective into the value and effectiveness of the initiative. The nine who became our respondents between August 2009 and December 2010 were a randomly chosen sample of the forty-two members of the second cohort. The sample contained eight men and one woman.

Starting Over: Anticipations, Hopes and Study Worries

Our respondents were interviewed on the first full day they attended the programme. The cohort was split into two and the training was repeated on Saturdays and Sundays. Six of our respondents attended the Saturday programme, while three attended on the Sundays.

Interviewees had either heard about the programme from family members or seen the advert in the newspaper. Most had applied because they wanted to find more meaningful employment. Some specifically wanted to work with children, while others were more generally looking for job satisfaction. The opportunity to work towards a qualification while gaining experience *and* still being able to earn a wage during the week was also a big draw.

I thought this might be something where I can give something back. As well as working, because I do need to work, I need to earn a living, bringing people something.

Several interviewees mentioned having heard good things about Kibble from others and a few knew people who had attended an earlier Men Can Care programme. Encouragement from family members had also played a part in some of the participants' decision to apply.

Almost all interviewees expressed the hope that they would be able to use their skills, experiences or attributes to contribute something to the work. They were also hopeful that the programme really would prove to be the start of a new direction for them, leading to a full-time job, qualification, career or other opportunities.

Just have a lot of fun, enjoy myself, give something back and to get something from my colleagues and the kids. To take that on, develop myself and to have a career, which I have never had.

"I am a driving instructor. A few years ago someone was recommended to me, a friend of a friend, but he didn't live in my area. I told him, I only do Paisley, but he said he knew Paisley because he used to go to the Kibble school. Until I met this boy, I thought Kibble was just a prison, a Borstal. So through the lessons with him, he talked about Kibble, about his experiences here, and it changed how I thought about Kibble. After he had been with me a while, his uncle started to take lessons with me as well and he talked about Kibble and the changes that he could see in this boy. He said a few years ago you wouldn't have wanted this boy in your house, for fear of getting things nicked. He said he had now got a full-time job, training to be a bricklayer, which he had started in the Kibble and that helped him when he got out. He is now back living with his mum, they have a great relationship now."

> I don't feel that it's a sacrifice, because it's going to make me grow in myself.

Many were really eager to starting working with the young people, so that they could start gaining hands-on experience and test themselves in what they felt could be challenging situations.

All the kids will be different and some may be quite stand off. You do worry, how would I deal with that situation. You really need to get started to know what it is like.

Most of the men could fall back on previous life experience to reach the conclusion that they would not be too anxious in their dealings with the Kibble boys.

Several participants expressed some anxiety about the study element of the course. They had either not been in education for a long time, or left school without qualifications. Others were worried about combining other commitments with the demands of the programme. Some had changed jobs in order to be able to attend, while a few said there could be possible clashes. Almost all participants had had to sacrifice something to come to Kibble at the weekend, whether leisure activities or time with their families.

The early stages

Between commencing in August 2009 and January 2010, the trainees participated in Kibble's induction programme which included a range of inputs that all new staff would be expected to have an awareness of, around areas such as child care law, child protection, lifespace intervention, and more practical training around internal policies and procedures and health and safety related issues. Significant features of this stage of the programme included Safe Crisis Management (SCM) training (Kibble's method of care and control including physical intervention) and Response Ability Pathways training a strength-based approach based around native American ideas on child and youth care. Trainees also attended workshops offered by Charlie Applestein, a visiting American child and youth care expert and, specifically, attended workshops organized around the theme of masculinity.

This internal training constituted a relatively gentle introduction to the rigours of the certificated training which was to follow. However sacrifices on leisure time and family commitments had already begun and the trainees in this cohort were successfully navigating these challenges.

> I have given up my time with my son. I give up any leisure time I have and am quite happy to do that.

Rites of passage and transitions

January 2010 marked the end of the first stage of the programme. The mood at this transition point was celebratory. This was skilfully channelled by having a 'graduation' ceremony at a local football stadium.

Our second interviews took place around the time of this transition. Most interviewees had just started working in the units at the time, having worked between one and five shifts. They were also just embarking on studying for their HNC.

They were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences of the in-house training so far.

It's been absolutely manic and funnily enough I would have not missed it for the world, what an experience the last four, five months has been, absolutely fascinating, good fun, difficult but on the whole really good.

Some parts of the training were especially singled out for praise, including the Response Ability Pathways (RAP) training and the session delivered by Charlie Appelstein. They had liked these elements of the training because of their focus on young people's strengths and the insights they provided into their behaviour; insights they felt they could apply outwith Kibble as well.

I thought that the RAP training was the best yet, it was the one for me where everything just clicked. When you're like, hold on a second, there's more to this than meets the eye, there are reasons behind the behaviour that these kids are acting out.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Safe Crisis Management (SCM) training was seen as the most challenging and difficult. This is the method used by Kibble to manage boys' challenging behaviour and can involve the use of physical restraint (described in the training as 'physically assisting' but referred to and understood as, physical restaint by the trainees) Some participants struggled with the physical demands this training placed on them and also worried about having to put what they had learned into practice in the future (see below).

The only real challenge has been the SCM, that's the physical restraint, but that was just because it was more physical and I'm unfit, I was in pain for few days [laughing].

Some participants had also found it hard to hear, through case studies and videos, about the kinds of backgrounds that boys in Kibble had come from and some of the things they had experienced. This affected them emotionally, but it also made them more motivated to try to create a positive environment for the boys. A growing awareness of the impact social circumstances might exert on boys' behaviours was evident in many of their interviews.

I've tried to put a positive on it and say in fact, well yes, obviously they've not had the best upbringing but the good thing is that here they can be looked after and helped.

Other challenges mentioned were giving presentations to the group, trying to keep up with the amount of information presented and being able to switch off from the training. However, most interviewees felt that the training was well-paced, that facilitators took breaks when necessary and that they had managed to make the vast majority of the sessions engaging.

> "There's opportunities there for us but it's right place at the right time. … I want to get into it full-time and build relationships with the boys over the course of the working week, rather than a couple of days, which isn't the best.
>
> Just if I could get … a better foot in the door – my foot is in the door … but if I could push it on a wee bit, you know, and let me concentrate. It's difficult when you've got a full-time job as well.
>
> I want to definitely work with young people. Well, with people anyway. I know that once we've got the HNC and the SVQ we can work right across the board in social care … at the moment it's definitely going to be with young people but you never know I suppose. To start with it was definitely here, but now I'm kind of thinking, well it doesn't need to be here you know."

The journey has been an experience and I want to work in social work.

Journey from start to now has seen a change in myself.

Really enjoying the course, correct decision in career change.

At the Graduation Ceremony.

It was good, even the way the trainers and speakers were putting the information across, you know they made sure that, if they felt it was getting a bit bogged down they took a break and came back, had a cup of coffee, it managed to keep us quite fresh.

Several participants also mentioned being impressed by the level of support available and the investment that Kibble was willing to make in its trainees.

It's amazing that this company are willing to put this much time and money into you, into us, that's a privilege. It's been fantastic, it really has.

On a further positive note, all the respondents interviewed felt happy and supported within their training cohort. They felt the group was enthusiastic and committed and gave examples where they had helped each other. Several participants also appreciated the banter and jokes made within the group, which could help to lighten the mood a bit.

It's been a really good bunch of people that I've been in the training group with (...) It's generally been to keep a good morale and just really help each other get involved with discussions.

There were only a few suggestions for improvement. One was to combine the theoretical sessions with practical experience sooner, avoiding the build-up of apprehension that some had felt about going into the units, which in reality had not been as difficult as they had feared. Also, some trainees felt that the organisation could have been better from the start of the training, in relation to things such as emails, timesheets, keys and communication.

August 2009 Starters

Starting the Higher National Certificate work

While most interviewees had found the training so far manageable, there was still some anxiety about studying for the HNC, which was just starting at the point of our second round of interviews. Participants were worried that it would take up a lot of their time, or that they would not be able to meet the standards required, which in their eyes would mean failing the course.

It doesn't matter how good you are when you go into the units, if you cannot get this HNC then you're not staying there it's as simple as that. So it is at the back of my mind because that has not started yet.

On the other hand, many participants were looking forward to starting their HNC. Some were wanting to find out how much work would be involved, so that they would be able to plan their lives around it, while others were looking forward to the content of the HNC, which they felt would provide them with valuable knowledge.

First shifts

The dominant impression that our interviewees had after their first shifts in the unit was a positive one. Many had been happily surprised by their first interactions with the boys who lived there, who had been more communicative and well-behaved than they had expected.

I was really surprised how relaxed the atmosphere is, I thought the boys would maybe be a little more stressed but the three times that I have been in, the boys have been very settled and easy to get on with as well.

Several of the interviewees talked of times where a boy had really opened up to them, even though they were new in the unit. This had been a very positive experience for them.

Some interviewees had also surprised themselves, interacting with the boys more easily than expected from the start. Others had taken a bit longer to find their feet, but most were positive about their relationship with the boys.

First couple of days you go in and you're the new guy and you know nothing, it was really quite awkward, but now I feel quite comfortable going in, most of the boys know me and most of the staff, I've settled in quite well, I feel quite comfortable doing it.

Relationships with staff in the units were good as well; participants mentioned being made welcome in the units and given time to familiarise themselves with the place and the boys. Only one interviewee talked of a negative experience, where he thought that other staff had been too competitive when playing sports with some of the boys.

One issue on which there was disagreement among the tainees was reading the boys' files. They had been encouraged to do so by Kibble staff, but some had been reluctant to find out about the boys' background before getting to know them.

> "There has been one or two times when we've been unsure whether or not to come in and we have had to ring round everybody else. The IT guys have not got around to sorting out our e-mails yet, if I had one gripe then that would have been sorted out from the start of the course."

> "It was one of my first shifts in the unit and one of the young boys sat and spoke to me for two hours about his family, he was very forthcoming and I came away from there with a big grin on my face, I didn't expect that to happen until the boys were more at ease with me, that made me smile and gave me a kick."

> It was something that I expected to see happening (Restraint) because you are well warned that this is something that does happen, but I was still quite taken aback by it and you're trying to work it out in your head, is that the only way that that could have been resolved?

I wouldn't intentionally go in and want to know everything about them - I'm not like that. I just take the guys as I find them.

Some interviewees also mentioned being apprehensive about having to restrain boys, or being present when this happened. They were worried they would not be able to do so, not being confrontational people, and almost wanted to get it over with so that they would know their own limits. The one interviewee who had seen restraint being used was ambivalent about it, recognising that it had probably been necessary but at the same time finding this difficult to accept.

The future

Most of the participants were looking forward to really making a contribution in the units and building further connections with the boys. The ultimate aim for many was to make a difference in some way. In the shorter term, they were looking forward to working in different units, starting their HNC and gaining more experience. While at the time of the first interviews, several participants had mentioned they were just trying out this line of work, to see if they would like it, by this time almost all were hoping they could turn working with Kibble or a similar organisation into a long-term career.

To get a full-time position hopefully, and work with these boys, gain as much experience as I can. There are guys I am working with, other staff members, who are 10 years younger than me who have a wealth of knowledge, even if I can gain a fraction of that knowledge then that's my aim. To gain some knowledge and work with these boys and try to put something back into them.

The third round of interviews with trainees took place in May/June 2010, when the trainees had all been working in the units for several months and were progressing on their HNCs. These were due to finish in a few months' time, after which they would be embarking on their SVQs, which they would do at their own pace, beyond the end of the Men Care Too programme. One of the respondents interviewed previously did not attend the relevant training session and was therefore not interviewed.

In order to get a more rounded view of the programme, it was decided to also interview relevant staff members. In total seven interviews were completed in June 2010 with staff involved in the delivery, administration, management and auditing of the programme and with one unit manager.

The HNC work

The participants were somewhat divided on their views on the HNC. There were those who missed the hands-on aspect of the induction training and found doing essays challenging and time consuming, which often made it difficult for them to motivate themselves. These participants also tended to find it difficult to see how the theories they were learning about were relevant to the job.

I don't know if you can bring some of the theories into an environment like the one I'm working in just now, I don't know if some of the theories would sit well with the kind of boys I'm working with, if you put them into practice with those boys.

Some had fallen behind with their essays due to personal issues or specific difficulties. Other interviewees were very enthusiastic about the HNC, finding that it gave them greater empathy for the boys they worked with and more insight into themselves and their families.

[The training] has changed my outlook on why they behave the way they do.

Learning about the formation of the welfare state was especially mentioned as putting the current situation into context. Some were clearly very happily surprised with the personal development opportunities offered by the training.

Overall, interviewees felt well supported in their learning, mentioning Kibble staff, their colleagues in the units, other trainees on the course and family members as people they could turn to for help.

> "I love it. Absolutely love it. The fact that you're sitting here, writing stuff down, and you're phoning guys up, (...) 46-year-old guys don't phone one another and talk about sociology essays! 'What part are you doing?' 'I'm doing functionalism and the other one's doing Marxism'. But it's brilliant, it's absolutely brilliant. And I tell people, and they're like, 'good on you, mate'. Thoroughly enjoying it."

“And all of a sudden- bang. I know what- my career path has opened up, whether I do it here, whether I do it in the States, which might be a- you know, that’s something that I might look at, I do it abroad somewhere else, I don’t really care. I know what I want to do: I want to work with these boys, I want to work with the boys who are in trouble.”

“Things like the RAP training, which teaches them how to interact with kids- they’re using that with their own kids, and instead of flying off the handle and having the screaming fest, they are using the techniques and the tactics, and they’re getting much better responses with their kids.”

View from the staff.

Staff views

Staff members were very aware of the potential obstacles trainees faced in engaging with the training, including having been out of education for long periods of time and lacking confidence. They described how the structure of the sessions had changed since the last cohort in order to avoid ‘information overload’ and how gentle support was given where necessary.

Some of them when they get their essay you can see their faces go drawn, some of them are struggling but we knew that was going to happen, it’s just about being there for them, gentle pushes and reminders; ‘ come on you have got this essay due in’.

On the other hand, they pointed out that the trainees did bring valuable (life) experience to the role and had been recruited by Kibble because of their suitability, so they were not ‘starting from zero’. In general, it was felt that the trainees were engaging really well with the taught component of the programme.

That was probably my expectation before, that it would be a battle more than it would be plain sailing, but I have to say, the majority, if I’m reading them properly, I think the majority buy in to it quite…they see it as an opportunity rather than something they’re being forced into doing, to get a job in this line.

The classroom based aspect of the programme was seen as an opportunity for Kibble to ensure that a large number of potential new staff had undergone high-quality essential training and to inculcate professional values and beliefs.

Because they do their initial training, they are prepared for when they come in the units, they know they have to take direction and they know the boundaries and limits and things that are in place.

Staff felt that through the intermingling of learning and practical experience the trainees were becoming more able to see the relevance of the learning material to the practice, although they acknowledged the link was not always straightforward. They had noticed that trainees did not only apply their classroom learning to the work in the units, but also to their personal lives.

Engaging with the boys

Some obstacles to building relationships with the boys came up in our interviews, mostly arising from the part-time basis on which Men Care Too trainees were working. Because there were often long gaps between their shifts, night-shifts started when the boys were about to go to bed and some

units had a high turnover of staff, it could be difficult to get to know the boys in the units, which then made interacting with them more problematic. Some participants felt that the lack of continuity and momentum in building up relationships limited their ability to interact meaningfully with the boys, although one interviewee also felt it had advantages.

Maybe it's the full-time workers maybe getting a wee bit more stressed out because they're there with them all week so they're a bit quicker with them and I'm more inclined to be able to, if something happens, be 'it's not that bad'.

Ways in which trainees attempted to build up relationships successfully was to turn up early for shifts in order to have a bit of extra time with the boys, engaging them in activities or creating some one-to-one time. Some participants had obviously started to use their own initiative in setting up activities, such as preparing meals with the boys' help, while others spoke of having been out on day-trips, which included fly-fishing, going to the coast or doing outward bound activities. All in all, the trainees were getting more confident in knowing what was needed within the units and engaging with the boys.

While many trainees still only had positive things to say about the boys living at Kibble, others had come across more difficult behaviour. They described a lack of social skills, volatility, aggression and the boys treating members of staff as servants or being overly physically affectionate. Some participants also mentioned finding it difficult to realise that the boys they worked with had committed serious crimes (especially the residents of the safe centre). Several participants described how they were able to accept some of the more difficult behaviours by reminding themselves that they were working with children who had often not had anyone to care for them.

But then you've got to say to yourself, he's just a 14-year-old boy that just wants a wee bit of your attention. It can be difficult, you know, but I just kind of see it as well, he's not got anybody else, everybody else has just abandoned him and left him, so.

Some participants were starting to develop their own strategies in dealing with oppositional behaviour, such as avoiding direct confrontation.

You just kind of try and work around them, you just try and divert the things.

Others still found challenging the boys very difficult and thought they would only get better at this with more experience. Similarly, for several participants, there was still some apprehension around whether they would be able to restrain the boys when their behaviour really got out of hand.

When this had not yet been experienced this yet, they expressed a sense of not having passed muster yet. Two interviewees did describe being involved in crisis situations. One trainee had intervened in fights between the boys and described drawing on the information and advice contained in the boys' case notes to tackle challenging behaviour. The other had stepped in when staff felt restraining a boy was becoming unavoidable and had diffused the

> "I think my own demeanour, I was a bit of a hothead, you know, I was never wrong and it was my way or no way. Selfish...the whole gamut of things. And people have seen, they've told me that the change is unbelievable. Quieter. I'll think before I say stuff, and I'll let people speak, I try to not to talk over the top of them."

> "I'm reflecting, as I say, on myself and also it's helped me try to understand empathy. Empathy's a great word … I never really knew what empathy was."

> "Yeah, I've got a mentor appointed but what I'm finding is that the staff I'm working with in the unit, they're all very supportive, you know, and very helpful, so if there's any questions or queries or whatever needed answered, you'd go to them."

situation. For him, it was the relationship he had with the boy and drawing on his parenting skills that allowed him to intervene.

I had been talking to him, and I had built up a wee bit of a rapport with him, through coming in, so I could see that this wasn't going to a nice place. So, I just went up and I put my arm round him. And he was kind of stamping his feet but he went to his bed without any problem.

Making a difference to the boys was an important motivating factor for the trainees. They described getting boys to see things differently and positive changes they had observed in the boys since they had come to Kibble. However, wanting to have this kind of impact could also be frustrating.

Sometimes it's a total feeling of like, uselessness, at times, you know, you go in and you speak to the boys and they're just not listening to what you're saying, they're just kicking off, there's really nothing you can do, they just go. And then other nights you'll go home and you'll have sat down and spoken to one of the boys and you feel as though you've made a difference and you can go away feeling a wee bit more confident in yourself.

Overall, it was clear from the interviews that the participants were really growing in their roles and were building up relationships. As they observed was the case with other staff, they were starting to come up with individual solutions to some of the problems they faced and at times were able to contribute significantly to what went on in the units. Besides feeling that they could have more impact if they had more time with the boys, our interviewees complained about the amount of paperwork they had to do, and the difficulty of finding the time to do sufficient shifts to gain the necessary experience in their otherwise busy lives. However, some also praised the staff in their units for being flexible about what shifts they worked, thereby making this less of a problem.

Most participants had found the staff in their unit very supportive. When asked about their relationship with their mentor, it was clear that, although some had used their mentor as an initial point of contact, most preferred to just ask the trained staff on the same shift, rather than waiting to contact their mentor, who often was not working in the same unit.

> "I've come in sometimes to certain units and I might have overstepped that mark in the sense that I'm seen as more of a chum. Some of the things that the lads confide in me, they might not necessarily do with other members of staff, because they think, apart from the fact that they sort of view me as not a real staff member yet, it's just shadowing, but also that maybe it's because I'm- I look a bit younger, I do feel like a boy, some of the boys have said, 'I thought you were a boy', 'he's not a staff member'. Sometimes that's worked in my favour, sometimes it's not, because…I'm not really an authoritarian figure when it comes to the lads sometimes and so I'm going to see how that plays out, but I'm treading the line and it's working all right for me at the moment."

> "But it is difficult… it is difficult. I'm not going to lie."

Staff views

The interviewed staff members who had insight into the trainees' work in the units were unanimously impressed with their progress.

It was acknowledged that a minority of trainees had struggled at first, but where this had been the case, staff had considered whether this was due to their personalities, the unit or the programme, and placed those who were more shy in units with especially supportive managers and staff teams. The work in the units was seen as an invaluable part of the programme, allowing the trainees to learn from experienced staff, including their mistakes and how they handled them.

We can only teach them so much with the HNC and SVQ. That's the book qualifications, and that's the bit that makes the SSSC nice and happy, and everybody else then you hone them by giving them experienced members of staff and they show them the directions that are good and pitfalls to avoid, and I think that's probably happened best in here, that the existing staff have informally mentored, tutored, guided them, as they've been on shift with them.

Staff related how the mentoring system had been changed for this cohort, with mentors no longer based in the same units as the trainees they mentored. This had been intended to make it easier for trainees to ask questions about practices they had observed and discuss difficulties in their units.

However, in practice most trainees had not needed this opportunity and instead sought advice and informal mentoring from staff in their units, who were more accessible and had more relevant knowledge. Accordingly, the number of formal mentors had been reduced. Additional support was provided on an informal basis by the programme administrators, who regularly checked in with the trainees and their service managers, and through formal quarterly reviews.

Staff members confirmed the importance of being able to step into crisis situations and become involved in restraints when necessary. They thought it was understandable that trainees were apprehensive about this aspect of their roles, as real-life situations never exactly mirrored the situations they had learned in training. However, it was felt that all members of staff had to feel at least competent to step in.

The Emerging Work-life Balance

Understandably, with all the participants now working in the units on a regular basis, there was more of a sense of struggle around fitting Kibble in with their personal and professional lives. Several interviewees had experienced bereavements or illness in their families, which had put them under even greater strain. Others also described feeling pressured or

> "I take the bus to Paisley town centre from Glasgow, but I still have to walk here and if I'm finishing a shift at one-o'clock at night, maybe getting to bed at 2.30 and up for work the next day …"

> "I think they are doing incredibly well and I think that is because of the process that they go through."

View from staff.

> When the course finishes and they want to move on elsewhere, they'll be better qualified than probably 50-60% of people who currently work in care at their kind of level, because they'll have two years' experience, if not more, and they will have formal qualifications that the SSSC are going to demand off of everybody. These guys are going to be in a much stronger position to advocate themselves for jobs.
>
> View from staff.

getting run down with all the demands on their time. Alleviating factors mentioned were the flexibility of Kibble staff, employers being understanding and having partners who were supportive or also studying for a qualification.

Staff views

The staff members interviewed obviously recognised the demands on trainees' time, and admired their commitment to the programme.

Some nights I need to work late and I will go in and I will feel like moaning because I am in a double shift but then they've just come in from their own jobs so it's hats off to them, some of them work Saturday and Sunday in here and then go to their job Monday to Friday and only have one weekend off a month, that's mind blowing to me.

Staff tried not to have too high expectations of the trainees when they came in for evening learning sessions and several described having to hold them back from taking on too many shifts in order to prevent burn out. Often only the trainees who were self-employed were able to take on extra shifts, thereby building up experience more quickly. Staff felt it had been helpful that this cohort, unlike the previous one, had known from the beginning that they would be expected to attend most weekends, so that this had not come as an unpleasant surprise.

No interviews with trainees who have dropped out have taken place, but the staff interviews did touch on the reasons for drop out. It was noted that the previous cohort had had a lot more people leave than the current one, where only one person had left the programme at the time of the interviews. Staff members felt that changes made to the programme had been beneficial in keeping people on board, most notably having a period of training before asking the trainees to work in the units. The training element had also become more structured and shaped so as to avoid information overload. Finally, the programme's duration was longer for the previous cohort, which may have caused some people to leave prematurely.

Most of cohort one should be finishing roughly August. They've been doing that for two years. You could argue that's them working seven days a week for two years. That's a lot for somebody to give up.

On the other hand, several staff members observed that the drop-out in the previous cohort happened mostly later on in the programme and that it was too early to tell what the eventual drop-out figures would be for the current group.

Most of the interviewees hoped to get a full-time position with Kibble. There was, however, by this stage some concern that there might not be enough vacancies for all of them, with only very few coming up and most of the Men Care Too cohort competing for them. Some participants had set their sights

elsewhere; they were considering working for similar organisations closer to home or were hoping to be able to find a job outside of the residential units in order to avoid the shift work, which they felt interfered too much with their personal lives. One interviewee also said he was looking forward to continuing with the educational aspect of Men Care Too, hoping to move on to an HND after he had completed the HNC.

Staff views

Most staff members disagreed with the trainees and felt that there would be a place for most of them in Kibble. They mentioned many benefits to Kibble of running the Men Care Too programme:

- Having the opportunity to make sure potential future staff members get quality and in-depth training
- Not having to rely on traditional recruitment methods as much, as the trainees are well known to the organisation once they apply for a position
- Addressing the gender imbalance in their staff
- Recruiting staff with a greater variety of backgrounds
- Replacing (less well trained and less carefully selected) sessional staff

As most of these benefits depend on Men Care Too participants eventually gaining paid positions within Kibble, there was a sense that the organisation would actually suffer if too many trainees went elsewhere. Staff members were confident, partly on the basis of the experience with previous cohorts that the majority of the current trainees would end up working for Kibble. This, they felt, was the ultimate reward for their involvement with the programme.

> “And then just seeing some of the guys progress from being kind of nervous as they enter the units are now some of them in full-time capacity, it’s been a privilege to have helped some of them move on the career ladder.”
>
> View from staff.

> I think some people do SVQ3 at college and that and it takes a year. See, we're doing it in months, we're doing half of it in three months on top of everything else.

The last Furlong: Heat Turned Up

Focus groups were held in October 2010. Two focus groups took place, each with around ten participants. The second group included two of the female interviewees.

The main subject of discussion in both groups was the tight SVQ deadline of which the trainees had recently been reminded. There was a shocked reaction to this in both focus groups and it was difficult to introduce other topics, as this was obviously the issue of most concern to the trainees, and the one they really wanted to talk about. Some acknowledged that they had known since the start of the course that they would have to be finished by the end of the year, but described having to finish their HNC work by December (with one essay left to do) and complete 4 SVQ modules by the end of December. With the SVQ work only having started 3 or 4 weeks previously, this would give them only 16 weeks to do the 4 modules. Comparisons were made with further education colleges, where the trainees thought students had a year to complete an SVQ, which made the Kibble deadline feel unrealistic.

Comparison was also drawn with the first cohort with it being seen as unfair that this cohort had had so much longer to complete the same work. Trainees reported some ambiguity about the actual date the work needed to be handed in by, with the last class on the 23rd of December, but instructions having been given that everything had to be handed in earlier in order for the work to be checked and finalised by that date. Also, the view that deadlines in the past had not been binding exacerbated the uncertainty about when work absolutely had to be completed.

The trainees were very worried because they had been informed that, if they failed to complete the work by the deadline, they would not get their qualification and no longer have an opportunity to finish the course work within Kibble, as the Men Care Too funding runs out at the end of the year. This also meant that those who did not complete the work on time would not be eligible for a contract with Kibble. Trainees were also unclear about other options: they were not sure whether it would be possible to pay to finish their SVQ in college outside of Kibble, given that it is an experience-based qualification. Several people felt that they would have to find some way to complete it.

You've got X amount of time to get it finished, if you don't get it finished [you've] wasted a whole year doing a qualification that you can't finish unless you pay for it yourself or like go to College or whatever.

The (time) pressure trainees described was clearly a source of stress. They pointed out that, in order to be able to complete the modules they had to work shifts, but that this often left them with little time to write. The participants felt that everyone on the course was capable of doing the SVQ work, but that an extra month to three months was needed.

The SVQ was generally seen as more difficult than the HNC, mostly because the trainees had become comfortable with the essay writing involved in the latter, had felt they had good support with this and now had to get used to a new way of doing things, with what they felt was minimal guidance. There was uncertainty about what was expected, whether there were word limits on assignments, how much learning could be claimed for each piece of practice and only one class in which they had been introduced to the work. Despite regular study support sessions during the week and at weekends, many of the trainees reported feeling 'lost'.

The level of detail demanded in the SVQ coursework was by some seen as pointless, while others felt that the necessary looking up of policies and legislation was very time-consuming, more so than the trainers, who had been involved in this field for years, seemed to expect. Finally, submitting SVQ work was seen as less satisfying and straightforward as handing in HNC essays, because often revisions often had to be made several times without specific enough feedback, making this another uncertain task. Some trainees were hopeful that the second piece of coursework may be easier than the first, because they would have gained some sense of what was expected.

The feeling in both focus groups was that the HNC/SVQ part of the programme should have started earlier and where possible should have been combined with the induction programme (for example, the health and safety SVQ module could have been combined with the health and safety training earlier in the year). Participants also said that the HNC part of the course could have been more intensive, taking some of the pressure off this last part of the training and spreading the learning and coursework out more over the year. Finally, they felt they should have been given more information about what would be expected from them, so that they would have been prepared better.

The Work and Life Balance (again)

Given the pressure and stress experienced with the SVQ deadline, trainees found it harder than before to balance the demands of the programme with their other employment and their private life, with especially the latter suffering. Despite advice from the MCT team to prioritise classes and academic work and not overburden themselves by agreeing to take on extra shifts, some trainees accepted offers of additional employment. In the latter case, scaling this back to meet the demands of the SVQ deadline, with the resultant loss of income, was not seen as a viable option. Managing everything was seen as especially difficult for participants with small children; several examples were given of starting studying very late in the evening and/or working through the night. Friends were said to complain that the trainees were always working, while partners seemed more invested in their successfully finishing the programme.

> SVQs, they're just bouncing all over the place...They never come back and say `that's finished' you never know if it's finished, it's a neverending job. It's like painting the Forth Road Bridge.

> The last couple of weeks have been pretty tough, they have been tough do you know what I mean, there's no getting away from it. Up until then it was, I don't know, just plodding along just nicely, everybody was quite happy.

> It's went from being kind of broke in gently to right at the deep end and get it done, if you know what I mean.

> Growing up and starting to see the value of stuff, you know, life in general, it's just what's important

Working in the units: "well prepared for the work"

In contrast with the coursework, interviewees said that working in the units had been fine and more enjoyable than they had expected at the start. They described having been intimidated at first, especially when they witnessed restraints (which some but by no means all had done), and that they had tended to step back when there was conflict. They had also avoided challenging the boys on their behaviour, feeling that they first needed to gain the boys' respect. Now most trainees felt like they participated fully in the units. It was again those who had not yet been involved in a situation where physical restraint was required for whom the prospect of doing so loomed large, feeling that they might be forgetting the relevant training and that they had not yet proved themselves as full staff members.

I'm building my fear for when I am actually maybe involved in [one], I'm more anxious about it because you know the training was kind of long ago for me and I'm thinking `oh am I going to be on the ball here?'

Dealing with difficult behaviour and the prospect of being involved in physical restraints was felt to be draining and the interviewees welcomed the greater freedom offered by other aspects of the job to undertake different activities with the boys.

Our interviewees felt that they had gone into the units well prepared for the work. The recruitment process had ensured that they would all be capable of the work, given their life experience, ability to connect with young people and for some a background of living in areas of deprivation. They felt the training had further equipped them and taught them what to expect of the work. On the other hand, there was a sense that a lot had to be learned in the units. Learning the theories was seen as providing an understanding of the boy's backgrounds, but not as sufficient for competency. Interviewees described observing other staff to learn the boundaries of acceptable behaviour for the boys and how to deal with incidents. While mentors had been little used, as they were not based in the same unit as the trainees, unit staff were felt to be very supportive, even providing feedback on coursework.

I'm constantly asking people in there noo for assistance, some of my work in there, an unruly boy, how do I deal with this, I'll ask, I've no got a problem with asking people for assistance.

However, there had been some reaction against the Men Care Too cohort when they first entered the units. The trainees felt that they had been stigmatised a bit as 'just' being Men Care Too workers and therefore not full members of staff, an attitude that the boys had sometimes picked up on. On the other hand, when it suited the unit they would be expected to fulfil the duties of any other staff member. In both focus groups some initial resentment from other staff members was mentioned, due to their losing overtime.

First trainee: I've had conversations with some of the boys and they'd be like 'you're no even proper staff, you're only Men in Care'.
Second trainee: Yeah but they say it because they hear other staff saying it.

The trainees were generally very positive about the boys they worked with and especially those in the focus group that contained women spoke about them with real affection and described having been emotionally affected by the work. They also described how they shared some personal information with the boys, who seemed to really value the connection this created. Building up relationships with the boys was seen by both groups as essential, a process that could be interrupted when participants were moved to another unit, or in units with a high turnover of boys. The trainees described how it could help to split up the boys in order to avoid bickering and confrontations between them and to treat them as individuals, rather that expect them to all react in the same ways. It was also emphasised that the boys' past meant that the most important thing was to care for them:

First trainee...they've all got different problems and you've got to realise that …
Second trainee: Aye they've all
Third trainee: .. that's what you're here for them to help them, no for you to get an easy ride eh.

Endings and Beginnings

Personal change

Our final interviews consisted of a combination of focus groups and individual interviews.

The trainees gave several examples of personal change during the programme. On the most basic level, they felt they had overcome their anxiety about the academic work and working in the units, with both of which they had felt well supported. On a more personal level, several trainees described having become less judgemental. Due to their experience of working in Kibble they had learned that boys in care were not necessarily 'bad' and they now resisted this definition of them by others. For some this also meant they were less likely to label people who seemed to belong to other stigmatised groups, such as the mentally ill. Furthermore, trainees described being calmer and more patient with their own families, because of their training in Kibble and the importance of not being confrontational and explaining things to the boys they worked with. They had also learned to take a step back from arguments and think about underlying reasons, as well as to apply other techniques they had learned at Kibble in different situations. Some acknowledged that in comparison to working in the units their home life appeared a lot less problematic, which made it easier to deal with.

I think it's just the dealing with the boys...you're no as aggressive as what you would have been wi your ane family. In fact, you talk round things and discuss things more so you're taking that hame wi you.

"I think if we had started the SVQ a bit earlier we coud have finished a bit earlier and then we'd have had more time for the SVQ – I think that might have been a bit more beneficial.

It's been ife changing. Absolutely … I had spent 25 years, 9-5 Monday to Friday … my wife looks back on it and sees that I'm more content in my job now.

I seem to be a bit more happy in my work, before it was quite mundane, you were getting up going to work, ding the same thing whereas now it's a bit more varied – downside is it's a weekends.

I just think we'll all be glad when the final SVQ is over.

Selection from group."

“Has it all been worthwhile Aye definitely – I think the good thing is I’ve got colleagues who have been doing this (svqs) for 7 year and I’d hate that - the good thing with the time constraints is it’s made you finish

You had to stop doing things with your family – two jobs – when we weren’t working we were sitting in front of the computer or reading books

...for me a weekend off wasn’t a weekend off

24/7 lying sleeping … thinking last thing you think about at night first thing in the morning, I’ve done that one what’s next … ? It was getting to the stage that in the units you’re doing something and thinking, there’s a claim (SVQ) in there somewhere It really did take over our life for the last few months”

Selection from group.

Gender

In both focus groups (the compositions of which was mostly men) there was agreement that both men and women had contributions to make to the work in the units. It was felt that boys were less likely to act up with a woman and more likely to display a need for emotional support and affectionate (rather than confrontational) physical contact. Men were seen as providing important positive role models and (by one group) as being needed to apply restraints. In other respects the difference between men and women was seen as minimal. Boys were felt to confide in male staff as well as females and both took responsibility for completing domestic tasks within the units. As for the training, in both focus groups the feeling was that it had been helpful to have women present, so that they could provide a different perspective. However, all trainees had been part of the Sunday group, which contained women, and it is possible that trainees from the Saturday group see advantages in being an all-male group.

I think you need women as a mix. because some boys will look for a mother figure right, maybe never had a mum (...) the boys will go like that with the women, but (...) they’ll carry on wi us, I mean in a head lock, but they’re wanting a cuddle, do you know what I mean.

A recurring educational input involved invitations to discuss gender. For the men, as may be anticipated, this was unusual. During the Men and Masculinity sessions, one of the telling comments was that hardly any of the men had ever before sat on chairs in a circle of mostly men. Yet the men we spoke to appeared to relish the opportunity to discuss the issues at the same time however they tended to make light of the importance of gender. It may be that the presence of women in the cohorts inhibited fuller exploration.

Hopes for the future: “We’re attractive to other agencies”

With the stress in relation to the SVQ, the possibility of not receiving a qualification and a perceived lack of full-time contracts likely to become available within Kibble, trainees hopes had shifted away to some extent from working for Kibble in the future. While this was still an attractive option for many, trainees had also started to look beyond Kibble for possible future employment. The general feeling was that, especially if they did obtain the HNC qualification, they would be able to get jobs in most places, as Kibble was seen to have a good reputation in the care field and they would be qualified and have valuable experience. Accordingly, for most participants were now focussing on completing the necessary units to get the HNC.

Getting a dad back

There were also personal and family benefits in trainees coming to the end of the programme.

My son will notice that he's getting his dad back. I've a son who's 12 and I'm in here in a work environment with disadvantaged kids but it's almost as if at this point I was ignoring my own kid – I wasn't getting the quality time …it's easier for the wife to understand because of job prospects … but it's a bit more difficult for a 12 year old to understand.

The finishing line

Of the first cohort 38 trainees eventually completed. Thirty-one of these gained employment at Kibble in some capacity on either full-time, annualised hours or sessional contracts.

The programme's completion coincided with a downturn in the economic climate. This seems to have resulted in lower levels of staff turnover at Kibble, fewer opportunities for expansion of services and hence fewer job opportunities.

Of the second cohort, 20 trainees were kept on by Kibble, again on different types of contract, and were offered the chance to complete the full SVQ assessment in the period January to March 2011. We were unable to follow up all of the men who did not gain employment at Kibble although some did move into other areas of social care and attributed the quality of the training they received in the Men care Too programme to their success in finding alternative employment. There was a sense among trainees that Men Care Too was recognized more widely as providing a high quality training experience.

> "We're attractive to other agencies, other organisations. I've applied for many jobs outside of Kibble since, well particularly in the last maybe three months I've started to apply. I'm getting replies back, I'm getting offered interviews with them and I always mention the background wi Kibble (...) so if it doesn't happen in here it'll happen out there for me, provided I get my qualifications."

> "sometimes these guys are so in touch with their feminine side it's scary"

Themes and observations

In this section we offer some observations and identify some of the themes that emerged during the course of our involvement with the life of the Men Care Too programme.

The trainees

The first thing to note, at a wider structural level, is that questions of men in child care remain pertinent. While it is difficult to access exact figures due to the way in which statistics for the social care sector are gathered, there is little indication that proportions of men to women in the workforce have altered significantly over the past decade. Since the earlier Men Can Care programmes, however, there are signs that the policy climate is shifting to recognize the relative lack of men in social care and to identify the important role that they can play in children's upbringing. The passing of the Gender Equality Duty and the work done by the charity, 'Children in Scotland', referred to earlier, to highlight the implications of this in ensuring appropriately gender balanced service provision is worthy of particular note in this regard.

The interest shown in the Men Care Too programme, like previous Men Can Care initiatives, reinforces the view that there is a large pool of men who would jump at the opportunity to move into employment in social care settings. The motivation to do would seem to be twofold: to make a difference to the lives of disadvantaged boys and to find a job that takes them away from the mundane nature of their previous employment and which offers a sense of personal fulfillment. These two elements come together in the sense that fulfillment, for many, is linked to a sense of helping others. Many of the trainees were also able to identify that their own experiences growing up may well have taken them down a different road than the one they eventually took. They were thus able to identify some of the social circumstances that might lead boys to end up in a place like Kibble.

The previous life experiences of the men recruited to the programme meant that, while they realized they had much to learn, working with the boys in Kibble, for most of them, held out few fears. They were eager to engage with the programme.

The structure of the programme

For the most part, the structure of the Men Care Too programme worked well. There were obvious transition points, such as the shift from the initial training to the HNC and later from the HNC training to the introduction of the SVQ component as well. The transition from the initial training was marked with a formal celebratory dinner at the St Mirren Football stadium and this

served an important function in giving the trainees a strong sense of the organization valuing them. This, in some respects, represents one of the high points of the programme.

As the programme progressed trainees remained, for the most part, very positive. However, some of the strains of increasing academic expectations along with the sheer extent of the demands placed upon them in terms of balancing their main employment, their Kibble employment and training and the realities of family life became more apparent as their journeys progressed. The introduction of the SVQ component, the apparent element of surprise about just what this entailed and the difficulties many of the trainees encountered in coming to terms with the SVQ system placed particular strain on them. Several mentioned that the SVQs might have been introduced at an earlier point and made comparison between the time demands placed on them and the expectations placed upon the previous cohort and indeed others training for social care through a college route. What was apparent, given the intensity of the different demands placed upon the trainees was that they felt that there was little room for extenuating life circumstances such as personal or family illness, which might impinge upon already very crowded schedules. Many of the trainees did acknowledge that project and Kibble staff more generally were appreciative of the demands they faced and were suitably flexible and supportive of them.

Impact on self and others

The nature of the programme, the learning and the reflection that this encouraged, elicited some spin-offs in terms of personal development. Many trainees commented on how their outlook on life had changed. They also noted that family members had commented on how they had noticed positive changes in demeanour. Several trainees felt that they were able to transfer learning from the course into how they engaged with their own children, noting that they were now more likely to stand back and seek to understand behaviours rather than merely reacting to them. Many identified their experience on the Men Care Too programme as life-changing.

On a less positive note some trainees identified a slight irony in them spending so much time with other people's children, often at the expense of being able to spend sufficient time with their own teenage children.

Surprisingly perhaps, trainees offered few reflections of any depth on questions of gender and gender role. This may be because there was less direct focus on gender within teaching than in previous programmes. The interview data did not give us worthwhile insights into the impact of having women on this programme as opposed only men, as was the case in the first run of Men Can Care. The women on the programme seemed to be considered and to consider themselves to be 'just one of the guys'. While on the one hand their presence might have had a leavening effect on primarily

male groups it could also be that their presence inhibited any more in-depth discussion of issues to do with gender and in particular, masculinity.

Impact on Kibble

There is a sense that, following the success of previous Men Can Care programmes, such initiatives have become embedded within the culture of Kibble. Staff interviewed claimed that the resistance to and suspicion of previous programmes from some established staff (primarily centred around access to overtime) had dissipated this time around as staff were able to see the benefits of bringing in well trained workers who were already imbued with the Kibble culture.

Project staff also identified a role for Men Can Care initiatives in shifting the culture at Kibble, which they identified as having previously been male dominated and 'macho'. It may, of course, be that such changes reflect wider changes in societal attitudes and changes to organizational culture brought about by a range of different influences.

Looking to the future

There was a discernible shift in trainees' perceptions regarding where they envisaged themselves after the programme. At the outset the vast majority expressed a strong desire to work in Kibble. As they journeyed through the programme, opportunities elsewhere in the care sector became more attractive or at least options to be considered. This looking beyond Kibble is, in many respects, consistent with the aims of the Men Care Too programme to provide employment opportunities across social care rather than just for Kibble. It also reflected a dawning realisation that trainees might not, as was the experience of previous cohorts, be able to pick up work in Kibble, due to the changing economic climate and fewer available openings than might have been anticipated.

Some final thoughts

The Men Care Too programme proved something of a roller coaster ride for trainees. It demanded fundamental changes to their lifestyles and to their attitudes. Its impact, both in the immediate and longer terms, has been life changing. Just what these long-term changes might be for individuals is difficult to gauge at the point of evaluation, as the trainees are still caught up in the pressures of completing the SVQ component of the programmed. After completion they are likely to engage in a period of reflection and perhaps consolidation or reappraisal of the programme's overall impact on their lives.

The programme's impact on the care culture in Kibble is similarly a matter for longer-term evaluation. On the evidence of previous Men Can Care initiatives it is likely that there will be some attrition among trainees over the coming years. Project staff, nevertheless, point to an overall beneficial effect on Kibble's culture. There is certainly a strong case to be made that inducting and providing suitable training to cohorts of prospective employees has the potential to inculcate healthy cultures within those cohorts that might be taken into the wider culture of the establishment.

The programme's impact in respect of providing employment opportunities at Kibble and in the wider social care sector is, in some respects, subject to the vagaries of external forces, especially the deteriorating economic situation. This has curtailed the numbers of vacancies at Kibble available to trainees, especially those completing the second cohort of the programme. As recruitment contracts, competition for vacancies both among Men Care Too cohorts and between these and wider recruitment streams is likely to increase. A squeeze on recruitment is not likely to be confined to Kibble but will be experienced across the social care sector. A further possible squeeze will be on salaries available across the social care sector as agencies are forced to drive down their costs to achieve contracts. This situation may affect the attractiveness of social care to men who might otherwise consider coming into the sector from other fields of employment.

The various Men Can Care initiatives that Kibble have been involved in, nevertheless, resonate with important themes regarding the role that men can play in the care of children, especially children in public care. The initiatives have both created a greater awareness of these issues but have also developed a body of men who are better placed to provide an appropriately diverse and skilled service for children in care.

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